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Travel in Egypt and the Sudan

[redacted]

1. Our trip from Luxor Station to Khartoum took 78 hours. Khartoum is 930 miles farther south (215 by water, the rest by rail) and 40 degrees warmer.

2. Wadi Halfa Customs was strange because they cleared all freight before they tackled passengers, but of course the two-day-a-week freight is higher priority than us run-of-the-mill passengers. Then came the railroad trip cutting across a sheer, howling, and uninhabitable desert from Wadi Halfa to Abu Hamed. Every 20 miles there was a "stop" consisting of a well, station house, two to five neat brick huts, and a siding. But really one felt that there was nothing. Level sands with desolate rock-pile hills of black.

3. The train itself pulled 17 cars of all price ranges. Our part had heavy overhanging eaves and heavily tinted glass to keep out the glare of the sun. Fine for 90% of the time, but we had unusually cool weather, with constant clouds. It was too dark and jerky to read in the cabins, so most of the Pullman passengers gathered in the dining car, talked (noisily) and played cards. At every stop half of us filed out to stretch our legs and to see the desolation. A hot-box developed at Stop 10, and after long and loud debate, it was decided to repack the axle-box and put a man aboard with more grease and cotton waste, to stay just above that axle and smell for danger. We arrived at Khartoum only two hours late. The grades of trains are: "Express", "Express Mixed", and "Mixed". We are continuing our journey south on a "Mixed" train.

(4. Mr. Shimmie, Director-General of Sudanese Antiquities, has been most cordial and thoughtful, booking passage for us to our dig destination and arranging accommodations for us on our arrival. He and his wife took us shopping and sight-seeing in and about Khartoum.)

TYPE ACT-DATE INFO-TYP-DATE AREA

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